

Jesus on the Blessed Life: Part 2

Text: Matthew 5:1-12

Introduction: Last Sunday we began a sermon series through the Sermon on the Mount. We find the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7. It is the longest extended teaching of Jesus that we have recorded for us in the Gospels.

The primary goal of the sermon was discipleship. We know that the crowds were present, but we see in the very first verse of Matthew 5 that Jesus' primary audience was His disciples. That's why I've titled this sermon series *Jesus on the Christian Life*. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gives His disciples instruction on how they ought to live as His followers, as citizens of His kingdom.

I know that for myself, I want to know how to live the Christian life. I want to know what it should look like for me to follow Jesus. I trust the same thing interests you as well. See, there are a lot of places you can go to find someone who will give you instruction on how you ought to live your life. You can go to the self-help section of the bookstore. You can hire a life coach or see a therapist. You can talk to friends at work or school. And all of those things might be beneficial at times.

But in the Sermon on the Mount, we have the opportunity to go right to the source, the Lord Jesus Himself. Jesus hasn't left us guessing. He didn't just save us from our sin and then turn us loose to figure things out on our own. He has told us how we ought to live. He has given us His will for our lives.

So, let's turn our attention again this morning to the Sermon on the Mount. Specifically, today the Beatitudes. We're in Matthew 5. Go ahead and turn there in your Bible if you haven't already. It begins on page 759 in the black pew Bible in front of you. If you don't own a Bible, we encourage you to take the pew Bible with you when you leave. You can also find the text of the Sermon on the Mount in the Scripture journal that we've made available to you.

(Read Matthew 5:1-12...Pray)

The main idea of the Beatitudes is: **Blessed are those who follow Jesus.**

Last week we saw that...

I. Blessed are the poor in spirit (Matthew 5:1-3).

The truth is that we are all poor in spirit. We have nothing to offer God. There is nothing we can do to make ourselves right with God. We must come to God empty-handed. We must come to God in humility. Those who recognize this reality and live in light of it are blessed, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

We also saw that...

II. Blessed are the mourners (Matthew 5:4).

As followers of Jesus, we mourn over our sin. And God comes to us with the blood of His Son, and He turns our mourning to rejoicing. He comforts us.

Jesus also said...

III. Blessed are the meek (Matthew 5:5).

Meekness is not weakness. It's humble strength that is found in the Lord. Those who are meek are willing to endure harm or injury with patience and without resentment. Jesus says that the meek will inherit the earth.

We also saw that...

IV. Blessed are the hungry and thirsty (Matthew 5:6).

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." We hunger and thirst for righteousness, and God satisfies our hunger and thirst. He does so through the righteousness of Jesus credited to our account. And He does so through His sanctifying work of conforming us more and more to the image of Jesus.

I trust you see how countercultural all of this is. This isn't the way the world around us says we are supposed to live. This isn't even the way that many who claim the name of Jesus say we ought to live. But it is how Jesus Himself says we are to live. At work. At school. At home. At church. Wherever we go. **Blessed are those who follow Jesus.**

The fifth beatitude says...

V. Blessed are the merciful (Matthew 5:7).

A. Now, to understand this beatitude, we have to first understand the mercy that we have received in Jesus.

- 1. Danny Akin says, “How much mercy you show is almost certainly the result of how much mercy you know” (Akin, 10).**
- 2. See, Goshen, the Bible is clear about our sin.**
 - a. Romans 3, quoting Isaiah 52, says, “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; No one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless, no one does good, not even one” (Rom. 3:10-12).**
 - b. A few verses later Paul adds in Romans 3:23, “For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.”**
- 3. And because of our sin, the Bible teaches that we deserve God’s judgment. We deserve death in hell.**
 - a. Romans 6:23 says, “The wages of sin is death.” Physical death, yes, but spiritual death as well.**
 - b. What you and I deserve because of our sin is death in hell. Separation from God forever.**
- 4. But God has not given us what we deserve, has He? That’s mercy.**
 - a. Psalm 103:8 says, “The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.”**
 - b. The Apostle Paul writes in Ephesians 2, “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ” (Eph. 2:4-5).**

- c. Peter writes, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Pet. 1:3).**
- d. Goshen, we have received God’s mercy.**

B. And as recipients of God’s mercy, we extend that same mercy to others.

- 1. There’s a parable that Jesus tells in Matthew 18 that illustrates this truth wonderfully. Peter asked Jesus, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.” Jesus went on to tell a story about a man whose debts were forgiven by the king. But upon having his debts forgiven, the man immediately went and found someone who owed him far less than he had owed the king. But instead of showing the man the same mercy that the king had shown to him, he had him thrown in prison. When the king found out, he said, “You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?” Jesus told the parable to illustrate the point that we who have received mercy from God must be people who extend that same mercy to others.**
- 2. This doesn’t mean that we don’t deal with sin or that we sweep it under the rug. That’s not how God has deals with our sin. But it does mean that we remember the mercy we have received from God when dealing with others and their sin.**

C. Jesus says, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”

- 1. Jesus does not mean that we somehow earn God’s mercy by showing mercy to others. Rather, we show ourselves to be recipients of God’s mercy when we extend mercy to others.**

2. **The truth is that we will never extend to others more mercy than God has shown to us in Jesus.**
3. **Jesus often rebuked the Pharisees for their failure to show mercy to others. The root problem with their lack of mercy to others was that they did not understand their own need for mercy from God. And if you don't RECOGNIZE your need for mercy from God, you can't RECEIVE mercy from God.**

D. I wonder what it might look like for you to live out this beatitude this week. To show mercy to those with whom you interact.

1. **Maybe when you go to work this week you will interact with someone who needs mercy from you. Maybe it's an employee who answers to you as their boss. They made a mistake. Maybe even a big mistake. If you're the business owner, maybe their mistake is going to cost you some money. You'll have a choice to make, won't you? Extend mercy or demand accountability. I'm certainly not saying that accountability is a bad thing. Sometimes accountability is necessary. But just as God has extended mercy to us when He had the full right to demand accountability, maybe you can extend that same mercy to your employee. And in so doing, you give them reason to ask you about the hope that is in you.**
2. **Parents, what about your interactions with your children this week? What opportunities might exist for you to extend to them the same mercy you have received from God? Maybe your child does something that deserves discipline. Discipline is a good thing. We teach our children by disciplining them. Actions have consequences. But we can also teach them when we show them mercy. We point them to the God who is merciful to us in Christ.**
3. **I want you to look this week for an opportunity to show mercy to someone. And if the opportunity presents itself to share the reason for your mercy, point them to the God who has been merciful to you in Christ.**

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy."

Next Jesus says...

VI. Blessed are the pure in heart (Matthew 5:8).

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

A. This is similar to the fourth beatitude where Jesus says that we are to hunger and thirst for righteousness.

1. **But this beatitude also reminds us that God is not just concerned with our actions; He cares about our hearts.**
2. **We know the Bible teaches us that our hearts are not pure apart from Christ. In fact, the Bible teaches exactly the opposite in Jeremiah 17:9 where the Lord says through the prophet Jeremiah, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick."**
3. **Have you ever heard someone say, "Well, God knows my heart"? I'm not so sure that's a good thing. I know that for myself it's often not. Because sometimes what's in here is actually worse than what's on the outside.**
4. **Purity of heart is the opposite of the Pharisees in Jesus' day. They were worried about the outside of the cup. But inside they were full of greed and self-indulgence (Matt. 23:25).**
5. **The truth is that apart from Jesus we are not pure in heart. But Jesus has made us pure in heart. And now we are to live in light of who we are in Jesus.**
6. **"Purity in heart is not a qualification for salvation; it is a result of salvation" (Quarles, 65).**

B. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

1. **The Psalmist asks, "Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place?" And then he answers, "He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully" (Ps. 24:3-4).**

2. Through Jesus, we are able to experience relationship with God now. We call Him our Father now. He calls us His children now. We boldly approach His throne of grace now. And what a privilege all of that is!
3. But the hope of the gospel is even more! There is coming a day when we will know fully, even as we have been fully known (1 Cor. 13:12). We will be with God. Jesus says we will SEE God!
4. Goshen, do you long to see God?

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

Jesus also says...

VII. Blessed are the peacemakers (Matthew 5:9).

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”

A. “Blessed are the peacemakers.”

1. Do you notice how all of the beatitudes flow out of what God has done for us in Christ? The same is true here.
2. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. That’s what Paul writes in Romans 5:1. We were enemies of God because of our sin, but now we have peace with God through Jesus.
3. And as followers of Jesus, we invite others to experience the same peace with God that we have experienced.

B. This is why peacemakers are called “sons of God.”

1. Jesus isn’t telling us here how to become a child of God. We become a child of God through repentance and faith. We turn from our sin and put our trust in Jesus.
2. But peacemaking is a characteristic of God’s children. If we have peace with God, we will be peacemakers in our interactions with others.

C. Now, I want you to think about your various spheres of influence. Your family. Your work. This church. Your friends. Your acquaintances.

1. What would it look like for you to be a peacemaker?
2. Paul talks about the marks of a true Christian in Romans 12, and he says, “If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all” (Rom. 12:18).
3. Have you ever known a professing Christian who was a bit of a flamethrower? They seemed to like conflict, and if there wasn’t any conflict, they would create it? That ought not be.
4. What about your interactions on the internet? I got off Twitter a few years ago because it wasn’t good for my soul. Evangelical Twitter is a cesspool of conflict. Sometimes it’s conflict over something important. A lot of it is conflict for conflict’s sake. That ought not be. Followers of Jesus are peacemakers.
5. Followers of Jesus don’t gossip behind someone’s back at work. Followers of Jesus don’t pick fights with family members. Followers of Jesus are peacemakers in the church.
6. Jesus told us how to deal with sin and conflict in Matthew 18. You start by going to the person directly. Peacemakers address things directly with the person involved.
7. Later in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, “If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift” (Matt. 5:23-24).
8. How can we who have been reconciled to God not also pursue reconciliation with one another?

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”

Finally...

VIII. Blessed are the persecuted (Matthew 5:10-12).

I understand verse 10 as the eighth beatitude with verses 11 and 12 as further commentary from Jesus on this beatitude.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

A. Living your life according to the beatitudes ought to invite respect and even admiration, but Jesus says that often it leads to persecution.

- 1. This eighth beatitude assumes that persecution is an inevitable part of following Jesus. Jesus says in verse 11 “WHEN others revile you and persecute you. Not IF but WHEN. If you live according to the beatitudes, you WILL face persecution.**
- 2. We know that Jesus often spoke to His disciples about the reality of persecution. On the night of His arrest He said to them, “Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours” (Jn. 15:20).**
- 3. In verses 10-12, Jesus mentions two reasons why the world persecutes followers of Jesus.**
 - a. The first is “for righteousness’ sake.” The world sees life according to the Beatitudes as a condemnation of itself. So, the world can’t allow that kind of righteous living to go unchallenged. Sadly, too often there’s not much difference between the ways of those who claim the name of Jesus and the ways of the world. In fact, if we’re not facing any degree of reviling or persecution in our lives, we should consider that perhaps our lives as Christians look too much like the lives of those around us.**
 - b. The second reason for the world’s persecution is “on my account,” Jesus says. The world is fine with Jesus as long as they can remake Him in their own image. Jesus is my friend. He likes all the things I like. He does all the things I do. And He’s always there to offer approval of my life choices and never judgment. That’s, of course, not the Jesus of the Bible as we’re going to see throughout the Sermon**

on the Mount. The Jesus of the Bible is Lord over every area of our lives. And He is the only way for us to have relationship with God. Jesus was inclusive in that He said that EVERYONE who believes will have eternal life. But He was also exclusive in that He said ONLY those who believe will have eternal life (Jn. 3:16). He said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (Jn. 14:6).

B. So, persecution is a reality for those who follow Jesus, but why does Jesus say that those who are persecuted are blessed?

- 1. “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” We are blessed when we are persecuted for righteousness’ sake because it is evidence that we belong to Jesus. That we are citizens of the kingdom of heaven.**
- 2. Jesus says, “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.” We rejoice because we know that the eternal reward for our suffering will far outweigh this momentary affliction.**
- 3. Jesus also says, “For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” That’s good company, isn’t it?**
- 4. Acts 5 says of the apostles when they were persecuted, “Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name” (Acts 5:41).**

Conclusion: The Beatitudes are a portrait of a follower of Jesus. They show us what a citizen of the kingdom of heaven looks like.

We don’t earn our salvation by living according to the Beatitudes. The message of the gospel is not do these things and then you will go to heaven. The message of the gospel is that you haven’t done these things. Your life apart from Christ didn’t look like this. In many ways it was the opposite of what we find in the Beatitudes.

But Jesus came and lived the sinless life you have not lived so that through repentance and faith. Through turning from your sin and putting your trust in Jesus. You have been made right with God.

And now you can live as one who is poor in spirit. You can mourn your sin and experience the comfort of God. You can walk in meekness and know that to be meek is to exemplify true strength. You now hunger and thirst for righteousness. You now have a heart of mercy toward others because of the mercy you have received from God. You seek to maintain purity of heart. You act as a peacemaker at work or school and in your family and in our church. And when you face persecution for these things, you count it all joy because you know that yours is the kingdom of heaven. Your reward is great in heaven.

How good it is, Christian, to hear Jesus declare over us, “Blessed.”